

310907

OST-04-19482-18

To; Doctet Clerk, Depart-
ment of Transportation

Dear Sirs my name is Walt
Whittle I have an assistant
dog, his name is Murphy
he weighs 90 lbs. I count on
him for various tasks
along with unconditional
devotion

I am living on a fixed
Income, and I also am a
member of IAADP, when
I read this article in my
I.A.A.D.P Magazine

I have Balance problems
~~It is because~~ Among other
problems, I have Multiple
Sclerosis.

Murphy is a Certified
Assistance dog, ~~by the~~
~~the~~ State and Federal

He was trained by
Assistance dogs of America
8806 State Rt 64
Swanton, Oh. 43558
I'm writing this letter in
hopes that it will help in
writing (NPRM).

If you will please write
back and let me know
of any ~~new~~ head way on
this issue, I am genuinely
concerned

God Bless
Walt, and Murphy

Walt Whittle
506 Saint Joseph St
Fremont Oh. 43420

The article being referred to in
this letter is about the size of
assistance dog and traveling with dog

Partners Forum

International Association of Assistance Dog Partners

VOLUME ELEVEN • NUMBER 2

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

New U.S. Air Travel Rules Announced

by Ed and Toni Eames

On November 4, 2004 the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) published a Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the Federal Register. Every person with a disability has the opportunity to comment on the recommendations and the IAADP Board will have a response which will be posted on the website, www.iaadp.org. This is the most important document developed by DOT in the last decade and should be read carefully by everyone concerned about air travel with their guide, hearing and service dogs.

Emphasis is placed on two major issues; international travel and website accessibility. The rules propose that all aspects of the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 and the regulations implementing the act will have to be followed by all foreign air carriers landing or leaving from United States airports. This should mean elimination of all restrictions

placed on our ability to travel with our assistance dogs in the cabin. Not only will the airlines have to make their websites accessible for blind and visually impaired customers using screen readers, but travel agents and all other companies related to the provision of air transportation will also have to comply. Unfortunately, the international air carriers are given two years leeway to make their websites accessible.

There are a number of other important issues explored in the document. The most immediate issue of concern to IAADP members is the provision that air carriers may charge a disabled pas-

senger for a second seat if a large assistance dog is unable to stay within the floor space allocated. This would certainly have a negative impact on those of us working with large dogs because of the nature of our disabilities. IAADP members requiring tall canine assistants for balance support while walking, those requiring large sturdy dogs for wheelchair pulling assistance and those needing to store essential objects during flight time in their service dog's back packs would be adversely effected. We recommend that anyone with a large dog threatened by this rule that would make air travel unaffordable send in your comments. If this rule is implemented, air travel will be placed beyond the financial means of many of us. We need to let our voices be heard!

Another issue raised is whether assistance dogs should be permitted in the cabin of flights lasting between 14-18

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Features You Shouldn't Miss

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Editor: Joan Froling

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Guide dogs Latrell and Keebler lead Ed and Toni Eames, other IAADP members and a parade of dog lovers through the streets of Matsumoto as part of the opening ceremonies at the first Japanese Assistance Dog Partner Conference.

New U.S. Air Travel Rules Announced

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hours. The longest flight at this time is 18 hours on planes going non-stop from the East Coast to Singapore. Everyone who has flown on long haul flights should respond to this question citing their own experience.

Several parts of the document have references to escort or meet and assist services. One position we strongly support is the recognition that the airline carrying us into an airport is responsible for providing escort service to the connecting flight, even if that flight is on another airline. A question raised is: Should the airline be notified in advance that a passenger with a disability will be arriving at the airport and will need escort service? IAADP does not see any value in this procedure, since many airports are in crowded urban areas and estimating airport arrival time is problematic. In the current regulations, escorts should be provided on a timely basis. IAADP would like to see a definition of *timely* and recommends a 10 minute time frame. However, the major unanswered issue is what are the consequences for an airline if the escort service is not provided during the 10 minute window?

One welcome change for blind travelers is the rule that escort personnel cannot demand that blind passengers use a wheelchair in transferring from one gate to another in the airport if the passenger does not need a wheelchair.

The actual document contains more than 100 pages and will take time to digest. We encourage all assistance dog partners living in the United States to respond to any issue of concern.

Comments must be received by February 2, 2005.

Please include the docket number, OST-2004-19626-1.

Written comments should be sent to
Docket Clerk, Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, SW
Room PL-401
Washington, DC 20590.

For confirmation of the receipt of written comments, please include a stamped self-addressed post card. Comments can be reviewed through the Dockets Management System (DMS) pages of the Department's Web site (<http://dms.dot.gov>). Comments may also be submitted electronically. Instructions appear on the DMS website. Click on the Link to *COMMENTS / SUBMISSIONS* on that website to email your public comment.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert C. Ashby, Deputy Assistant
General Counsel for Regulation and Enforcement
400 7th Street, SW
Room 10424
Washington DC, 20590

Phone 202-366-9310; TTY: 202-755-7687

Fax: 202-366-9313

E-mail: bob.ashby@ost.dot.gov.

Service Dogs Love &

Family is the common thread that IAADP (International Association of Assistance Dog Partners) and Greenies® dog treats have in common.

Dr. Joseph Roetheli, at the insistence of his wife Judy, conceptualized the idea for Greenies®. The family's male Samoyed, Ivan, had terrible halitosis -- Ivan's breath was bad enough to chase the family from the deck when he joined them -- and Ivan always wanted to be with family members.

Judy had purchased numerous products from pet stores and vet clinics in an effort to improve Ivan's bad breath but little if any improvement had occurred. Ivan also had kidney problems from birth, so the Roethelis' did not want to put him under anesthesia to have his teeth cleaned by their trusted veterinarian. Hence, Judy insisted that her husband, who had managed research and development (R&D) for the Federal government for 18 years, but never anything related to pets, try to formulate a product to clean Ivan's breath.

Finally after much coercion, Dr. Roetheli relented. In a visit with the family dentist at the University of Missouri School of Dentistry's faculty practice, Dr. Roetheli described the situation and that he was about to embark on formulating a product in an attempt to improve the breath of their family dog. Dr. Roetheli's dentist volunteered to provide some research studies from the school's library. Armed with these studies and his R&D background in agriculture, Dr. Roetheli

EMERGENCY ACTION

We need YOU and every IAADP member

Deadline: Feb. 2, 2005

As the editor, I hope to get our December/January issue to you at least a few weeks before the February 2, 2005 deadline for Public Comment on Air Travel Issues. Much may depend on what happens to our newsletter during the holiday mail rush as it circulates through the postal system.

If you read the front page article, you will know the U.S. Department of Transportation has come out with a rule whose provisions will impact how the airlines must accommodate passengers with disabilities in the future. I'm told the regulatory power of this rule carries almost the same weight as the laws passed by federal and state legislators. Unfortunately, the DOT's Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) contains a policy that could make travel with an assistance dog unaffordable for many IAADP members. Turning it from guidance into part of the new Rule will give this Policy "teeth." It is likely to influence the policies of

Need Greenies® Too!

began in earnest to try to improve Ivan's breath. Within five weeks, Ivan's breath was about 85% improved and the Roethelis organized S&M NuTec, LLC as a family based business, despite the fact that neither Judy nor Joe had business experience; Judy was educated as a teacher.

Then with refinement from Dr. Lon Lewis, an internationally acclaimed veterinarian who also earned a Ph.D. in animal physiology and is a Board Certified Veterinary Nutritionist, Greenies® were born. Subsequently a family business evolved to aid the welfare of pets and pet owners. First sales occurred in the spring of 1998. Today, over 300 million Greenies® have been sold with exports to more than 45 countries, and Greenies® have recently earned the Veterinary Oral Health Council's prestigious VOHC Seal of Approval for both tartar and plaque -- the first dog treat to be awarded this seal. The tests required to earn the VOHC Seal of Approval are based upon the dogs consuming one Greenies® per day. The testing was performed using four sizes of the toothbrush shaped product - petite, regular, large, and jumbo - to coincide with the appropriate weight of the test dogs.

Greenies® are the original (green) smart-treat®. Among the numerous attributes, independent third party test results document that Greenies® clean teeth, freshen breath, reduce bad breath, and dogs love the taste.

S&M NuTec, named in honor of the Roetheli's two sons, Steffan and Michael, and new technology, continues as a family oriented business with interest in community service. Over the past 18 months, S&M NuTec has made donations to over 100 dog organizations with the product, plus other donations valued at over \$100,000. One of the recipients has been IAADP.

Judy Roetheli stated, "It is part of our value system to give back to the community and to persons with disabilities, including those requiring service dogs. In fact, service dogs provide a double benefit in that we can help the dog and help a person requiring a service dog, too. Service dogs are part of the person's family."

Toni and Ed Eames have been fans of Greenies® for a number of years now since their dogs received their first Greenies® as free samples at a trade show. Ed says, "We not only provide Greenies® to our guide dogs, Latrell and Keebler, at IAADP conferences, but we also provide Greenies® at home as treats especially after having their nails trimmed and grooming. Our cat, Kizzy, is so enamored with Greenies®, he tries to steal the Greenies® from the dogs. Toni can hardly wait for Feline Greenies® to reach the market, so all our cats can enjoy this culinary delight." It's all in the family.

ION CALL

OP Member to write a letter of concern to many of us!

foreign air carriers as well, towards accommodating an assistance dog team in the plane cabin.

After reading my "Sample" Public Comment Letter on the following pages, I encourage you to write a letter giving your input to the DOT on this issue. It can be any length.

Public Comment is different than an ordinary letter writing campaigns. All public comment is read and discussed by those involved in drafting the Final Rules, we are told. So what you have to say is important. . . someone will read YOUR letter! In fact, the DOT will put most of the public comment it receives from you and others on a website so the disabled community, the airlines and other government agencies can read what Americans have to say on various issues.

There are an estimated 20,000 assistance dog teams, 2,000 of which belong to IAADP. If every IAADP member wrote a letter, DOT officials would know they were hear-

ing from one in ten assistance dog partners. The Agency would take what we have to say VERY seriously. If only a handful of advocates bother to write a letter, the DOT and the airlines are unlikely to give much weight to our letters of opposition.

We need an avalanche of letters! We think this issue is very important to the future of the assistance dog movement, in terms of access rights and the principle of "reasonable accommodation," both here and abroad.

Feel free to use some of the ideas or arguments or points I raised in my Sample Public Comment Letter if you wish, as long as you put it into your own words.

Some of you might choose to focus on how important your dog is to your independence, dignity and safety and how this policy might negatively impact your life, making travel or at least frequent travel unaffordable. How would it

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Emergency Action Call

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affect your academic aspirations, the job you were thinking of applying for, the places you dreamed of visiting, your ability to stay close to family members? Personal testimony is always compelling.

You might wish to discuss how unfair this policy will be to disabled persons who don't have a smaller size dog like you do. Or to those who do not have a choice in what size dog they are partnered with, like guide dog users over six feet tall and wheelchair users. You might discuss how uncertain and nerve wracking future travel will be with a large assistance dog unless the DOT takes action and follows IAADP's recommendation.

While it is optional, we strongly suggest you ask the government to adopt the language that IAADP is recommending, as a substitute for the airlines "solution" to having large assistance dogs in the plane cabin. Copy the recommended IAADP language verbatim. . . it is only one paragraph in length (See *Italicized Section* in the Sample Public Comment Letter by Joan to locate that paragraph!)

Thanks so much for considering this request!

Where To Send:

Comments must be received by February 2, 2005.

Please include the docket number, OST-2004-~~14482~~. 14482

Written comments should be sent to

Docket Clerk, Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, SW., Room PL-401
Washington, DC 20590.

For an electronic submission, see the end of our front page article for Contact Information.

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SAMPLE Public Comment Letter

Docket Clerk, Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, SW., Room PL-401,
Washington, DC 20590.

December 8, 2004

Re: Service Animal Rules in NPRM on Air Travel for Persons With Disabilities

DOCKET # OST-2004-~~14482~~. ~ 14482

While I support the efforts by the Department of Transportation to improve air travel on many fronts for passengers with disabilities, there is a critical issue in the NPRM which I must respectfully ask DOT officials to reconsider.

The new rule states that airlines may require passengers like myself to pay for an extra seat if my assistance dog cannot fit directly in front of, or under my seat. If I cannot afford that option, I will be given the choice of shipping the dog in cargo or taking a later flight. None of these "solu-

tions" remotely resemble a reasonable accommodation for me to be accompanied by my canine mobility aid.

Please understand that I do not have a choice in the size of my assistance dog! For reasons of health and safety, the ethical use of an assistance dog for tasks like balance support, wheelchair pulling assistance, backpacking or guiding requires the SIZE of the dog be carefully matched with a disabled handler's height and/or disability related needs.

It does not seem fair that only passengers who are very short or those whose disability permits the use of a smaller size dog will be accommodated in the aircraft without additional charge. As a result of the proposed rules, those of us who must work with a larger size service or guide dog due to our height and/or a physical or sensory disability no longer have to be accommodated.

What happens to disabled persons on fixed incomes like me who cannot afford to buy two roundtrip airline tickets instead of one? I and many other disabled people will be excluded from air travel, a direct contradiction of the Air Carriers Access Act.

Regarding the proposal that our dog be put in cargo as an alternative to paying for an extra seat: First of all, separating us from our assistance dogs would be a violation of the Americans With Disabilities Act, as found in *Crowder v. Hawaii* decision of the Ninth District Court. Shouldn't the ACAA provisions be as protective of disabled air travelers as the ADA is of those of us using trains, buses, etc.? Secondly, because so many animals have died when shipped in cargo due to the temperature extremes, airlines are not allowed to ship on most days during the cold weather and hot weather months. Spring and fall would be the only times an airline might be able to offer the cargo option to me and even then, only to certain destinations. Last but not least, the reality is that neither I nor the vast majority of assistance dog partners I know would ever consider placing our guide, hearing or service dog in cargo because of the emotional distress the separation would inflict and the risks involved.

Furthermore, this so called option overlooks the fact that a number of disabled persons like myself only travel alone because we know we can count on our service dog in the plane cabin to assist in ways directly related to our independence, dignity and safety. Service dogs may assist with transfers to the aisle chair or retrieve dropped items or provide us with immediate access to essential medical supplies in their backpacks. Those of us who can't stand up to reach things in the overhead compartment, reach the call button for the stewardess or bend down to get into a carry-on bag, have trained our service dog to get to his feet and work with us so we can extract prescription medication and a beverage to help us swallow the pills, something that can't always wait for the drink cart to roll around once every two hours, not when faced with symptoms such as sudden weakness, dizziness, throbbing pain or shortness of breath. Some of us also carry insulin shots, special food or dietary supplements, respiratory aids, Keopectate, materials to change a dressing, a cervical collar, wrist splints, a fresh battery for the T.E.N.S. unit, devices that monitor blood pressure or glucose levels, and the list goes on. This is in addition to our wallet, personal grooming necessities, plus pens, paper, a book or other items to help us pass the time